

THE BEACON



A PAPER FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL
AND THE HOME



VOLUME I.

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*The sweetest sound our whole year round—
'Tis the first robin of the spring!
The song of a full orchard choir
Is not so fine a thing.*

E. C. STEDMAN.

For The Beacon.

Elisabeth's Adventure.

BY FRANCES M. DADMUN.

There was once a little girl named Elisabeth, and she lived across the sea in a city called Amsterdam. Because it was a city, she had no outdoor place to play in except the courtyard of her mother's house. It had a floor of large, smoothly laid bricks and high walls of smaller bricks, with trees from the next yard peeping over. It was a safe place, but not spacious, and Elisabeth often longed to escape through the hall to the world beyond the front door.

One morning she was standing in the doorway. Her eyes were wistful, she was so tired of playing in the courtyard. It was a high doorway, with an arched top, round as her little head. But Elisabeth did not look up to see how high it was. Instead she looked down at the floor which had been recently scrubbed and was so shining that the open door was reflected in it. It was not quite dry, and its wetness reminded her of the beautiful courtyard somewhere in Amsterdam where she had once played while her mother and the lady of the house talked together in a stately parlor. Elisabeth had felt ill at ease in that parlor. The ceiling was so far above her head that she thought she knew how her kitten must feel when it rolled over on its back and looked up at the beams in her mother's more modest living-room. The floor was so slippery that it reminded her of the canal in winter where the boys skated. She longed to slide on it, but dared not. The chairs were stiff and straight, with bright brass-headed nails which invited your finger-tips; but they were not good to sit upon because they were high with plump cushions. Elisabeth had tried to climb into one, and the cushion had slid off to the floor. When this happened, the lady of the house had suggested to Elisabeth's mother that the little girl might like to play in the courtyard.

So Elisabeth found herself in the most fascinating of play-places. The houses were not close together, as they were at home, and there was so much sky to see,—miles of it, deepest blue, with clouds like masses of feathers. Elisabeth wished she could ride on one, and decided that she would try when she grew up. The yard was paved, like her own; but, instead of being monotonously smooth, it had hollows and ridges, like the surface of the canal when a boat had gone by. Elisabeth played that she was walking



A COURTYARD IN AMSTERDAM—PIETER DE HOOGH.

on water, stepping carefully from ridge to ridge, until she saw real water coming from a wonderful pump and running across the yard in a ditch. A good-natured servant allowed her to play with the pump, and, when her mother came to call her, Elisabeth was very wet and rather dirty, but entirely happy.

She had never forgotten that courtyard. At night she often dreamed of starting out to find it; but it had been only in dreams, for she was a little girl who had never gone out by herself. But why shouldn't she? That very morning mother had said she was growing tall. Elisabeth looked back. The hall was long and narrow, and there was no one in sight. She looked out, and saw two boys fishing in the canal, down the street. Then she stood very straight, making herself as tall as she could, and started out.

The street on which Elisabeth lived was like many in Amsterdam. There was a broad canal in the centre whose green water reflected two rows of beautiful elms. On either side were wide walks, well paved. It was a pleasant place for a morning stroll; but few people took advantage of it, and Elisabeth had the street mostly to herself. Once a boat went by, carrying vegetables, and several times Elisabeth passed houses where servants were scrubbing the doorsteps or even the sidewalk; for all the people of Holland keep the sidewalks in front of their houses as clean as their dining-tables. When Elisabeth found the sidewalk all soap and water, she lifted her skirts as she had seen ladies do, and tiptoed through the wet. It was necessary, too. It was the fashion then for little girls to wear long skirts like their mothers, and Elisabeth

looked very much like a miniature matron in cap and apron as she walked sedately down the street.

She had thought that, when she came to the place where the boys were fishing, she would ask them to let her fish, too; but, when she actually came to the point, she was shy, and went by without speaking. Presently she turned a corner into a street without any canal, and soon she began to meet people. Many smiled at her, and a few asked her where she was going. One of these was a handsome man in a purple velvet cloak, with a heavy gold chain around his neck. But, although, Elisabeth admired him very much, she only smiled in reply and walked on.

A great clock in a near-by steeple began to chime the hour. Elisabeth had heard these bells from her own home, but then they sounded far away and softer. Now they seemed to shake the ground she was standing on. She stopped short, feeling frightened for the first time. For the first time, too, she noticed that there were many people in the street. They were pouring out of the church whose steeple held the bells. The bells had not become quiet when she heard the beating of a drum. The people began to press backward. At first they jostled her; but, as she tried to stand still, they soon left her, a tiny figure, alone in the middle of the street. And down upon her came marching a company of tall men, with broad hats and colored sashes, with swords and spears and gleaming muskets, while the rolling of the drum grew louder and louder.

"Look out, little girl," shouted some one in the crowd, "make way for the civic guard."

But Elisabeth was too frightened to move.

Suddenly she felt herself seized by a pair of strong arms and drawn to one side. The civic guard swept by, and Elisabeth was crying convulsively against a broad, brown shoulder.

"Bring her in here, Pieter," said a woman's voice, and Elisabeth found herself in the stately parlor of her dreams!

"Why, it is little Elisabeth!" said the voice again. "How could she have come this distance all by herself?"

Then, indeed, Elisabeth was petted and taken out to the courtyard to see the pump. When the man in the brown coat, whose name was Pieter, said he would take her home, the lady gave her some delicious little cakes, which Elisabeth carefully put in her apron.

Elisabeth rode home on Pieter's broad shoulder. You can imagine how glad her mother was to see her. Elisabeth put her hand in her mother's, still holding her apron with the little cakes; and, when Pieter, who was an artist, saw them together, it suggested to him a picture. So he painted Elisabeth and her mother in the courtyard with its brick floor and brick walls and trees peeping over, while a woman stands in the doorway looking out upon the canal which Elisabeth saw on the morning when she ran away.

"I don't know how to teach my boy his duty towards God," said a mother to me one day. "Very well. Teach him his duty to the little bird at nesting time, and you have taught him to begin to adjust his relation to the Infinite."

JENKIN LLOYD JONES.

Not how much talent have I, but how much will I use the talent that I have.

Alfred's Camp.

BY HILDA RICHMOND.

"If only the year could be all summer!" sighed Alfred, watching the boys racing past with their sleds and skates. "Winter is so lonely."

"And isn't summer lonely?" asked Aunt Margaret Douglas, who was visiting her sister for the first time in many years. She had lived in Europe for nine years, and only remembered Alfred as a baby.

"Not a bit!" cried Alfred, hopping from the cold window to the fire. "The boys are so nice to me. They take me out in their pony carts, and wheel my chair down to the baseball park, and take me along to picnics and everything. But the best fun is camping out. Did you ever camp out, Aunt Margaret?"

"No, I think not," said the lady, with a smile. "How do you do it?"

"Well, the fellows load a wagon with things to eat and blankets and a tent, and then we all set out to the old cabin by the lake, and there we live for two weeks. They always take me along, and it's the most fun! I help wash dishes and turn the pancakes on the stove and clean knives in the sand, but they do all the hard work. You should see Jay Trent split wood! He can make the chips fly, I tell you. And they cook the best things to eat you ever tasted,—fish and chickens and roasted apples and potatoes and roasting ears—they just have everything that's good."

"That seems strange," said Mrs. Douglas. "I haven't seen a boy in the house except you since I've been here."

"They are very busy," said Alfred, quickly. "They are the best boys in the whole world. Lots of big boys wouldn't bother with a cripple like me, but they always ask me. They are all big boys. John Smith is nearly fourteen, but they are willing to take a lot of trouble for me. If I could go along, I'm sure they'd take me skating and coasting."

"But they might drop in once in a while to see you," went on Mrs. Douglas, anxious to see what the boy would say.

"Well," said Alfred, brightly, "they like the cold weather so much that they can't bother with a chap like me. I just wish I could do something nice for them, for they're so kind to me. I don't mind it that they forget me in winter—at least, it's all right, and I want them to have fun, though I get lonely without them."

That week a strange thing happened, for Alfred went to visit his grandmother for the first time, since he was crippled, in the winter time. They took advantage of a pretty, bright day, and Alfred, all wrapped in robes, did not catch cold on the short journey. He always had good times at his grandmother's, and the time passed pleasantly with his mother and his Aunt Margaret to help amuse him; but somehow Alfred was very glad to get back to his own home.

"Why! why!" he gasped, as his father carried him into the house. "This isn't our house!"

But Mr. Amsden went right on into a beautiful glass room, which was just the big, old-fashioned porch shut in with large windows, and he put Alfred down in front of a snapping grate fire with real wood in it, in his own arm-chair.

"This is your camp, son," said Mrs. Amsden. "Aunt Margaret had it built for you. You may invite the boys in any time, and can entertain them any day you are able to have them."

"You did all this for me?" said Alfred. "How kind everybody is to me!"

That very afternoon the six boys, who always took Alfred along with them when they went camping, hurried into the camp at Alfred's invitation, and the big room fairly rang with laughter. Down on the hill the boys were coasting and laughing and shouting, but the guests did not hurry away to join in the fun. They were helping to celebrate the "house warming," as Alfred called it, and passers-by turned to look at the house that was usually so quiet and demure. And they lingered as they saw a happy little boy hopping about on crutches, getting this and that for his guests, for everybody in town liked Alfred and wanted to see him happy.

"Now we must cook our camp supper," said Alfred, throwing open the doors of a small cupboard. "Aunt Margaret filled this with good things for the house warming."

The potatoes were rolled into the ashes, and the kettle hung on the little crane, while the boys set the table with the tin dishes, just like the ones they used in camp, and Jay made oyster broth in a water pail. Everybody was busy and happy, and, when the feast was finally ready, they called Mrs. Douglas and Mrs. Amsden to share in it.

"I—I don't like quite so much pepper in my soup," faltered Mrs. Douglas, looking at her portion served in a tin cup. "I don't think a great deal of pepper is healthy."

"That's only ashes," said Jay, taking a critical look at the broth. "Alfred stirred the fire too often, and Joe blowed the ashes off the potatoes, and the soup got most of the dirt."

But, in spite of little things like that, the meal was very enjoyable, though the ladies excused themselves very early, and did not wait for the dessert, which was also sprinkled with ashes. The boys were not so particular, and they ate till the last crumb disappeared.

"I'll never say winter is lonely again, Aunt Margaret," said Alfred, when his aunt had to return to her distant home. "I've had more fun this winter than in any summer, and all on account of the camp. I can never thank you enough."

"Nor can I," said Mrs. Amsden; "for Dr. Willoughby told us just this morning that the sunshine and exercise have so improved Alfred's health that very soon he will be able to have an operation that will most likely make it possible for him to walk again. Isn't that wonderful?"

"O mother, did he say that?" cried Alfred. "Surely there never was a boy so happy as I am. But I never will give up this dear camp, no matter if I can run and walk again. I love it too much to ever forget it."

Journal and Messenger.

Pussy Willows.

If when coming through the pasture,
In the sunny nook
Where the willows dip their branches
In the breezy brook,
You should see some little people
Bobbing up and down,
They're the pretty pussy willows
Coming back to town.

A Sunny Afternoon.

Julie had a new tricycle that her uncle Dick had given her on her birthday. She was six. It was very shiny and new and it went beautifully: it did not squeak a bit.

After lunch, the keen wind of the last few days having blown away and taken the clouds with it, Julie went out on the sunny pavement to have a good time. Back and forth she went, the peak of her red cap standing out behind, while she laughed softly to herself in delight.

Some children were playing on the other side of the street. Julie did not know them: she had not lived at this place long. They had dolls and doll go-carts, but no tricycle. Julie could see that they were watching her, and she made her wheels go faster and felt very grand and satisfied.

At least she felt that way at first; but presently something that Nurse had talked about yesterday came into her mind, and she snapped out loud very crossly, "No! I don't want to!"

"I have been waiting for the weather for three days," she went on quietly in her own mind, but just as crossly. "And the tricycle is mine. It isn't theirs. Uncle Dick gave it to me for my birthday for myself."

It was a mistake for Julie to think that last thing, because what Nurse had said began with Uncle Dick. She had said that he was the finest young man she knew for putting himself in his neighbors' place.

"What does that mean, Nurse?" Julie had asked her.

"It means that he remembers other folks' feelings, and he feels with them, and, if they need it and he can, he helps them out."

"I suppose," said Julie now, "those children's feelings are that they wish they had a tricycle, too; anyway, that they wish they could have a ride on one. But what Nurse said wasn't in the Bible. I don't have to keep it, and I won't. There!"

She rode off to the far corner and back again. Then, very slowly, with a very sober face, she began to cross the street.

"I don't know all the Bible," she said, sighing. "I think maybe it's got that same meaning in it somewhere, because this sounds just like the Bible. So I'll keep it."

She sighed another deep sigh, and then she determined, like a wise little girl, that, if she was going to put herself in these children's place, she would do it nicely. She smiled at them and pushed the tricycle toward them and said: "It's my birthday present from my uncle. It goes beautifully. Wouldn't you like to try it?"

They were so delighted, and they thanked her so hard, and they praised the tricycle so much that Julie did not sigh again. Then when her own turn came after all theirs, it was twice as much fun as ever. She rode to the far end of the street and had turned around to go back when a big black automobile went whirling past her. It stopped at the corner where the children were, and Julie could hear them squeal and could see them jump up and down. In all her six years Julie had been in an automobile once, for about ten minutes: she had talked about it ever since, and she had dreamed about it a good many times at night.

When she got to the corner, the tall man with the long fur coat who had come out of the automobile looked at her through his goggles and said: "Why, yes, indeed!—glad to have such a nice little girl along. Honey, run home," he said to Julie, "and tell your mother to tie your head on tight and give



HIS FIRST AUDIENCE.

you plenty of wraps, for we shan't be back until five o'clock."

At seven o'clock Julie was still telling about it. Then Nurse took her off to bed.

"Nurse, it was very funny," said Julie. "I started to put myself in those children's place; but I couldn't finish, because they turned right around and put themselves in my place! And it was splendid!"

Nurse nodded her gray head with a knowing nod.

"Yes, dearie," she said. "Things are often let turn out just like that. Sometimes I think they do it oftener than any other way."

SALLY CAMPBELL, in *Sunday School Times*.

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.

EMERSON.

For The Beacon.

The Egg Mountain.

BY EMILY WILLIAMS.

Once upon a time two very, very small red ants started off on a journey. One was named Ruddy and the other was named Reddy. They had not gone far when they came to an egg which was lying directly across their path. "That," said Reddy, "is a mountain. We must tunnel our way through it." So each one picked up a tiny piece of sand and began to scrape away at the shell. Soon they had a little bit of a hole, and then a little bigger one, and then—all of a sudden the inside of the egg came pouring out and carried Ruddy and Reddy off in its stream. Fortunately, they could both swim, so they got safely to land and dried all their twelve legs in the sun. Then they went carefully up to the egg and looked in the hole. There was still a little liquid left in the shell. "Evidently this mountain has a river running through it," said Ruddy, "We must get a boat and row across it."

So they made a beautiful little boat of a petal of a violet that was growing close by, lowered it through the hole to the river, and rowed across. They took their pieces of sharp sand with them, and, when they reached the shell on the other side, they soon scraped a hole big enough for them to crawl through

and continue their journey. But they were so tired that they could not put one foot before the other, and had to lie down on some moss to rest. "That was very hard work," said Reddy. "Next time I come to a mountain I'll climb over it." "Indeed, it was hard work," agreed Ruddy. "Next time I come to a mountain I'll walk around it." And so they did.

Some Ugly Little Imps.

If you don't believe in fairies and the elves are not your friends,

And you have no faith in brownies or in gnomes,

Let me give you just a glimpse
Of the ugly little IMPs

That invade to-day so many happy homes.

IMPoliteness is an IMP whom every child should try to shun;

And older people, too, without a doubt.

IMPatience is another

Who will cause you lots of bother
'Less you send him quickly to the right-about.

IMPertinence and IMPudence are naughty little twins,

And, oh, it is astonishing to see

The mischief that they do!

And, my dear, if I were you,
Their comrade I would never, never be.

One little IMP will sit astride a pencil or a pen

Whene'er there is a problem hard in view,

And draw his mouth 'way down,

And whine out, with a frown:

"IMPossible! IMPossible to do!"

IMPrudence and IMPenitence and IMPulse are three more

(Though the latter is not always under ban);

And there are more, no doubt,

Who are hovering about

To get us into mischief if they can.

Of little foxes you have heard, who spoil the lovely vines,

These ugly IMPs are dangerous, too, you see.

Let us raise a battle shout!

We may put them all to rout,

Oh, what a glorious victory that would be!

St. Nicholas.

For The Beacon.

Roots and Reason.

BY CHARLES W. CASSON.

Jesus once told a parable about a sower who went out to sow. Some of the seeds fell upon the beaten pathway, and the birds came and ate them. And other seeds fell into shallow earth, where there was only a little soil, and, when the little plants sprang up, their roots were so small and short that the heat of the summer destroyed them. But some of the seed fell on good soil, and sprang up, and grew large, and bore much grain.

It was a wonderfully helpful story, and has been told over and over by millions of people since Jesus used it in preaching to the people long ago. He wished to show that the truth that fell upon the surface, or was spoken to people who would not give it any thought, would not be of any use. But the truth that fell into the minds of people who wanted to know the truth would sink deep, and spring forth in fruitful action.

The roots of a plant are like reason in religion. If the plant has not enough roots to give it nourishment and strength, it will surely die. And, if you do not have a reason in religion that gives you faith and confidence in the truth in which you believe, your religion will not be of very much service to you.

It is the work of the root to go deep down into the ground. It does this for two reasons. First it gives a strong foundation to the plant or tree, so that, when the tempest blows, the roots will hold firmly to the earth and prevent the plant from being blown over.

Then it also reaches down into the soil for the moisture that is there in the heat of summer, and so gives life to the stalk and leaves that stretch up into the hot sunshine of a summer's day. Sometimes, when no rain has fallen for many weeks, the roots have to go down very deep for enough moisture to keep the plant alive.

And in religion our reason has to do just exactly the same work. It is not enough to repeat certain sentences of truth, or to say we believe in God, or to seem to be religious. Many people who say they believe in God show that they really do not believe when some great sorrow comes to them. They believe only in times of calm and prosperity.

But it is the business of our reason to dig down deep and to discover the reality of truth. Instead of simply saying that we believe in God, we try to see how much proof there is for such belief. We reason it all out and dig down to the real facts, and always we find sufficient proof.

What we need to do is to be so sure of God that, when any storms break over us, and misfortunes come, and we lose friends and fortune, we shall still be able to believe in God and his goodness. Then we are like the plant with the deep roots that held it safely erect.

It is often said that reason and religion are opposed to each other. Many people still suppose that we cannot reason out anything in religion, but that we must just take it on faith. But we who are liberals have discovered that reason never injures religion, but always makes it stronger, and makes us stronger as well.

Let us not be afraid to reason about religious truth. If it is really true, our questioning cannot possibly do any harm. And, if we do not question, we shall never have the faith that will stand in the time of storm.

Like the seed it is necessary for us to do two things. We must sink our roots of reason deep down, so that we may take strong hold of that which is true, and we must rise into the sunshine and bear fruit of love and kindness. But we cannot rise until we reason. And to rise high we must reason deep.

QUESTION BOX.

"Should the church support the school? Should the children's pennies ever be used to help support the church?"

Yes, to both questions. Every church is morally responsible for the religious education of its young people. Every child owes a debt of gratitude to the church that makes his school possible. Adults appreciate what they pay for. No matter how able the school is to meet its own bills, or how poor the church is, an appropriation from the church should be made toward the school's expenses. On the other hand it is equally important that the school do something toward the cost of its own maintenance, and, if it also contributes toward the support of the public service, the children will learn that the church asks help as well as gives it, and will early form the habit of making sacrifices for religion. Even should the gifts of the church and the school balance each other, while no financial gain would follow, a moral gain would be felt on both sides. Adults would be taught to take the school more seriously, and children would be educated in philanthropy by contributing toward a purpose near at hand and easily understood. Church and school are not two, but one. Let them so act.

How young should a child enter the Sunday school?

At the age of one month. That is a good time for the Field Secretary to call upon the little one and secure its name for the Cradle Roll. It is assumed that there is a Cradle Roll, and that it is part of the organization of the school. As soon as the name of an infant is secured on this record, that child is an enrolled member of the Sunday school; and, as the school is a vital part of (not an adjunct to) the church, it follows that the child is an enrolled member of the church,—a "birthright member," as the Friends say. We all agree to the general proposition that the children are under the guardianship of the church. Let us make them officially of it, that they may grow up within and not without the fold. Then, at adolescence, let us give them the opportunity to confirm by their own act what parents and friends did for them at the start.

If the question means at what age children should be received at the sessions of the school on Sundays, it can only be said that that must be determined by the wishes of the parents and the facilities of the school for caring for the little ones. As a rule, the earlier the better.

Every happy thought adds a line of sweetness to the face; every happy word, a tone of sweetness to the voice; every happy act, a touch of sweetness to the manner.

B. BROWN.

RECREATION CORNER.

BERLIN, MASS.

January 29, 1911.

Unitarian Sunday School Society:—

Dear Sirs,—I am going to tell you how much I enjoy *The Beacon*.

I enjoy making out the puzzles in it. They are very interesting indeed. We all like *The Beacon* at Sunday school.

Mamma cuts out all the bright sayings and puts them into a book and keeps them.

I am solving some of its puzzles now and I think it is great fun.

I am sending you the answers to this week's issue, which I hope will be correct.

Yours very truly,

ARLINE B. WOODBURY.

ENIGMA XXVII.

I am composed of 22 letters.

My 11, 2, 3, 14, 22, is a food.

My 20, 15, is a verb.

My 17, 2, 19, 8, 21, 12, is a guard.

My 6, 14, 19, 12, 17, 1, 18, 3, 4, is an instrument to talk through.

My 10, 14, 3, is a number.

My 5, 4, 3, 10, 14, 3, 21, 12, is a group of words.

My 16, 2, 17, is a toy for boys.

My 13, 18, 7, is the opposite to girl.

My 9, 2, 3, is something parents wish.

My 13, 12, 19, 10, is something worn around the waist.

My whole is a proverb.

RICHARD D. GATES.

ENIGMA XXVIII.

I am composed of 11 letters.

My 11, 6, 8, 8, is a ravine.

My 8, 9, 11, is a boy.

My 1, 3, 5, 5, 8, 6, is to make a hissing sound.

My 1, 6, 10, 11, is to forward.

My 7, 9, 4, is a rodent.

My 2, 9, 1, is a verb.

My whole is a country in Europe.

BROOKS HILEMAN.

HIDDEN RIVERS (UNITED STATES).

1. This cream is sour, I think.
2. Oh! I ought to go.
3. It matters not what color a dog is.
4. Those who made law are often breakers of law.
5. Mildred, go to school.
6. James broke the platter.
7. That is a sacrament of the church.
8. Arise! kill the despot, O Macbeth!
9. This is a cold day.
10. Ernest Lawrence took the prize.

E. A. C.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 22.

ENIGMA XXIV.—Recreation Corner.

CHARADE.—Campbell.

CHANGED HEADINGS.—At, bat, cat, fat, cat, hat, mat, oat, pat, rat, sat, vat.

Contributions have been received from Ruth West, Dorchester, Mass.; Harold H. Day, Buffalo, N.Y.; Dorothy Learned Setchell, Rosindale, Mass.; Henry Angier Jenks, Canton, Mass., to all of whom we return hearty thanks.

THE BEACON.

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